



## **Annual Report 2015**

### **Introduction**

This report covers the period 1st January to 31st December 2015 and falls within 2012-2016 Global Programme. ICSW activities for 2015 are reported under the following six priority areas:

- Empowerment, resilience and social protection
- Networking and policy innovations in our work
- Communicating with our stakeholders
- On-going global advocacy and socially responsible global governance
- Regional level cooperation
- Policy dialogues and capacity-development

### **Highlights of 2015**

- ICSW has continued to promote and extend its support and work on the Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI). The organization has been a founding member of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, bringing together over 80 non-governmental organizations working on issues of social protection and promotion of SPFI.
- Among a very few NGOs the ICSW was invited to become a member of Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) established in June 2012 on the recommendations of the G20 Development Working Group. The Board is jointly chaired by ILO and the World Bank, and works on cooperation in the area of social protection to achieve a greater impact at the country level. The ICSW participated in New York meeting in November 2015.
- At the 53rd session of the UN Commission for Social Development in February 2015 ICSW presented a written statement on the priority theme, "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world".
- At the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2015 ICSW made a comprehensive statement on the nexus of gender and ageing, highlighting the plight of older women and the need to address their marginalization in society.
- ICSW actively participated in the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People ([www.rightsalliance.org](http://www.rightsalliance.org)).
- The IASSW, the IFSW, and ICSW have worked throughout the year on a common Global Agenda on social work and social development. In 2015 the work on the Global Observatory to monitor the implementation of the Global Agenda continued.
- ICSW continues its commitment to two refereed professional journals. ICSW provides Global Social Policy to all ICSW members as a membership benefit and distributes the electronic version of the *GSP Digest* to a wide network of social policy practitioners. ICSW is a partner with IASSW and IFSW in the journal *International Social Work*.

- In June 2015 the ICSW in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region organized a high-level Forum in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert Foundation on the concept of human dignity and its perception in the Arab region and internationally.
- The government and NGO representatives attending the 10th ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on empowerment of older persons in ASEAN in September 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, adopted the proposals presented by ICSW on issues of rights, resilience, vulnerability, capacity development and improving social services within ASEAN.
- ICSW South Asia Region collaborated with Head Held High Foundation, Bengaluru, India on global initiative called **GAP - [Global Action on Poverty](#)**. A movement to eradicate poverty globally, through thought and action the **GAP 2015 Summit** brought together influential members of the civil society from India and the SA region. The 2 day event was held at Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram & Gujarat Vidyapith in March, 2015.
- In the wake of the highly-acclaimed December 2014 Forum convened in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic by ICSW in cooperation with DIDA (La Dirección de Información y Defensa de los Afiliados a la Seguridad Social) and aimed at exploring ways and means to enhance the visibility and effectiveness of social protection in Latin America, a regional meeting was convened in June-July 2015 in San Paulo, Brazil by Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC), CBCISS (Brazilian Board on Cooperation in Social Services), and DIDA, highlighting the significance of SPFI in the region. On behalf of ICSW Regional President for Latin America has also delivered a statement in San Juan, Puerto Rico at the regional conference "The right to health and social policy: challenges for social work" convened in October 2015.
- ICSW Europe convened five open international seminars: 1. "Migrants and Social Protection Floors. Facilities and obstacles to access to different Welfare State services in time of crisis" has been held on 23 April 2015 in Madrid (Spain) and attended by 8 Member organizations. 2. Expert workshop "Social Investments" was organized in Helsinki, on 9 June 2015, in cooperation with the Finnish member. The seminar was conceived as a follow-up to the seminar in Madrid and also covered preparations of the European Observatory. It was attended by speakers representing European Social Platform, IFSW and other organizations. 3. Expert seminar "Social protection floors as investment in Central and Eastern Europe" in October 2015 was jointly organized by members from Georgia, Lithuania and Slovakia in Tbilisi (Georgia). It was attended by either members or potential members from 15 countries, along with the participants from several international organizations. The meeting adopted a Regional SPFs Memorandum. 4. Expert seminar "Minimum income schemes – development, challenges and consequences. A Comparative Perspective" was organized in Basel (Switzerland) in November 2015 by German-speaking members from Switzerland, Germany and Austria. The Report of the meeting is published in German and English. 5. The conference "Human Rights, Social Protection Floors and Citizenship" was organized by Danish members in Copenhagen in December 2015. The outcome document is the Report of the Conference as well as a Position paper on tendencies regarding Social and Economic Rights.
- The outcomes of the above meetings were publicised through different media -global, regional and local newsletters, public media, and the web.
- ICSW Regional presidents in most regions have been actively involved in advocacy and capacity-building activities on behalf of the ICSW, promoting core messages of its programme.
- Revamping of the ICSW Website was successfully completed.

The global and regional programmes are supported through the countless hours of voluntary work by ICSW members.

The administration of the Global Programme was conducted from the global offices in New York, USA and Kampala, Uganda. The programmes in the ICSW regions are coordinated and conducted from the offices of the Regional Presidents.

### ***First priority area: promoting empowerment, resilience and universal social protection***

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*ICSW has a commitment to making intellectual and on the ground contributions to inclusive social policy and universal provision of social protection.*

#### **OUTCOMES**

##### **Promoting universal social protection**

This area is seen by ICSW as one of the key elements of progressive social policy. ICSW considers social protection as both a human right and a sound economic policy, and as investment in people rather than an expense. Social protection has been a constant theme in ICSW advocacy efforts regionally and globally, in 2015 it has been taken to a new level with policy advice on SPFI provided at the national level. Relevance of social protection has increased in the wake of the global social and economic crisis; however, in many cases on the ground efforts to promote social protection remain fragmented. There is a need for coordinated responses to build forward-looking socio-economic policy aimed at universal public provision of basic social services and basic income.

The Social Protection Floor concept developed by the UN and defined in the ILO Recommendation No.202 is seen by the ICSW as a first step towards universal, rights-based and comprehensive social protection for all. The SPFI is a set of basic social rights, services and facilities that a citizen should enjoy. ICSW promoted the SPFI at global level in its annual statements to the UN Commission for Social Development in 2011-2015

ICSW is a co-founder of the **Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors**, joining forces with more than 90 NGOs and Trade Union Federations. The Coalition plays an increasingly important role in shaping the debate, raising awareness, achieving a national consensus on policy priorities and monitoring progress of SPFs. Within the Coalition the ICSW was instrumental in promoting the role of social protection in the process of formulating the new development goals for the post-2015 development agenda. The ICSW intellectual leadership was seen in the role Michael Cichon, the ICSW President played in conceptualization of the Coalition goals and proposing important benchmarks for its activities through the years.

##### **Links with academics in social welfare and development**

ICSW continued its commitment to empowerment, social welfare and social development. ICSW provides a regular update on social welfare and social development issues in the journal *International Social Work (ISW)*. The Executive Director has an obligation to provide two written inputs to the ISW Journal under the rubric "News and Views" as the ICSW contributions. The ICSW representative also continuously takes part in annual selection of the best articles published by the ISW Journal.

Through a financial arrangement with **Sage Publications**, SAGE provides each ICSW member with an annual subscription to *Global Social Policy*. ICSW sends both the electronic

version and hard copy of the *GSP Digest* to over 200 social policy specialists throughout the world.

### **The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development**

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), ICSW, and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) started the development of a Global Agenda for social work and social development at the Joint World Conference held in Hong Kong in 2010. The Agenda was formally adopted in 2012. ICSW has made the Social Protection Floor Initiative its major contribution to the Global Agenda, and continues to emphasize this theme in discussions and deliberations pertinent to the Global Agenda.

The Global Agenda Observatory structured around the four themes of the Global Agenda is aimed at gathering evidence on its implementation. The first report was published in 2014 in connection with the Melbourne conference. In 2015 ICSW continued working on agenda implementation, regionally and globally.

### **Social protection interagency meetings**

#### ***SPIAC Board has found its niche***

ICSW is one of a few international NGOs that have been invited to participate in the **Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B)** created in June 2012 on the recommendation of the G20 Development Working Group presented to the G20 summit in Los Cabos, June 2012. The Board aims at sharing information and promoting cooperation between partners in the area of social protection at the international and national levels. The Board is jointly chaired by the ILO and the World Bank, and ICSW takes part in every meeting. The Executive Director of ICSW participated in the November 2015 meeting in New York, advocating for a new dedicated ECOSOC resolution on social protection, and was supported by both country representatives and the UN Secretariat. The issues of capacity-building and knowledge-sharing were also discussed at length. In that light the most illuminating was the presentation to the participants of some outcomes of the joint effort to develop the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) Tools. This may be considered a quite impressive international effort overseen by the SPIAC Board to develop and test in country contexts specific machinery aimed at supporting government efforts to develop social protection systems. ISPA tools not only highlight current provision and analyse existing gaps, but also provide cost estimates.

#### ***Health Promotion Forum Geneva November 2015***

ICSW supported the Forum organised by the Alliance for Health Promotion (A4HP). The forum was conducted to exchange ideas and practices and take a snapshot of current approaches, evidence, challenges and opportunities. It provided an opportunity to mobilise partners and members of the NGO community to participate in the planning, development and actions to fulfil the goal of A4HP to speak as a single unified NGO voice on key policy issues. The 5<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on health promotion was held in November 2015 in Geneva and considered the following theme: "Closing the gap in health equity through technology".

### ***Second priority area: Networking and policy innovations in our work***

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*ICSW has a substantial global network of members, related individuals and organisations that are a powerful force for change.*

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Joint World Conference on social work and social development**

2015 witnessed a high-intensity preparation process for the joint world conference of International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), ICSW, and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) to be convened in Seoul, Republic of Korea in June 2016. The preceding conference held in July 2014 in Melbourne, Australia was successful in terms of high level of preparation, excellent attendance, and productive discussions. ICSW actively participated in the organization of the Melbourne Conference and its activities, including moderating the workshop discussions, opening and closing speeches. Following the initiative put forward by the ICSW, the outcome document-- Melbourne Declaration on Promoting Social and Economic Equalities was adopted. The need to increase the ranks of the participants, bringing more social development practitioners, along with representatives of academic community to such global fora was emphasized by ICSW. In the wake of the Melbourne conference ICSW has been actively involved in strengthening partnership arrangements with IASSW and IFSW and coordinated joint efforts aimed at making operational the Global Agenda Observatory to monitor the implementation of the Global Agenda.

### **State of the Global Organization and regional challenges**

The meeting of the Supervisory and Advisory Board in Melbourne in 2014 immediately following the General Assembly was an important benchmark in the ongoing efforts aimed at revitalising and re-building the organization and suggesting strategy for the next two years. The wide-ranging and frank discussions at the General Assembly and the Board were aimed at adjusting policy directions, putting tangible and practical goals. The need for inclusiveness in social policy formulation, improved visibility of ICSW and maintaining strategic partnerships was emphasized. Strengthening member organizations was seen as a vital task, along with streamlining and re-orienting ICSW towards improved organizational structure, promoting membership building and ensuring financial sustainability.

The ICSW Management Committee during its regular meetings convened over Skype paid constant attention to the coherence of efforts in implementing decisions of the GA and the Board.

### **Keeping the membership informed**

The two global offices have maintained a high level of networking and keeping the Board, Management Committee and members informed of matters of interest from other regions or sectors. The Global Cooperation Newsletter has become a platform for presenting most update information on social protection and SPFI globally and regionally. In both the global and regional Newsletters, members are informed of research into social development in their countries or regions. The featured articles and information materials presented at the Global Cooperation Newsletter highlight best practices and ongoing efforts of ICSW members at the global and national level. Every effort is made to solicit contributions to the Global Cooperation Newsletter of outstanding international scholars and well-known practitioners, to present experiences and know-how of other non-governmental organizations, keeping the readership well- informed of recent developments and about the global issues and challenges.

### **Cooperation with other International NGOs**

### ***Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors***

Closely working with Friedrich-Ebert Foundation and other partners ICSW continued efforts to explore new opportunities in promoting social protection at all levels, as well as exploring various instruments useful as national means of implementation. The statements prepared by the Coalition were used in the preparatory process leading to the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by the UN in September 2015.

The Coalition also actively promoted establishing a dedicated financing facility that enables the global community of nations to systematically support national efforts to reduce poverty, insecurity and inequality through social protection. The proposal to create the Global Fund for Social Protection was submitted to the Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015.

Under the auspices of the Global Coalition and in collaboration with the Graduate School of Governance at the United Nations University in Maastricht the ICSW led a research project that developed a new global Index for the Social Protection Floor. The Project has just been finalized and the results will shortly be published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation in Berlin. The Index and the Ranking of countries by the size of the social protection gaps will be published on the websites of the ICSW and a number of other coalition members.

The ICSW also supports a multi-country project of the Coalition that aims at promoting national policy dialogue processes on national social protection floors. The Project is lead and financed by the Friedrich- Ebert- Foundation and will be finalized in 2018. The ICSW is providing technical and policy advice. Participating countries are Asia: Myanmar, Mongolia; Middle East and North Africa: Morocco, Tunisia, Iraq; Latin America: El Salvador, Costa Rica; Africa: Zambia, Nigeria, Namibia; Central and Eastern Europe: Albania and Georgia.

### ***Cooperation with IASSW and IFSW.***

Apart from the key role played by ICSW in the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors described above, ICSW continues active tripartite cooperation with its sister organizations— IFSW and IASSW.

ICSW meets annually with the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) to further discussion on social policy and joint efforts. In January 2015 the meeting was held in Vancouver, Canada. The meeting was attended by all three presidents of IASSW, ICSW and IFSW. The participants discussed the list of speakers selected by the IPC and proposed pertinent changes aimed at better geographical distribution as well as gender balance among the invited speakers. The need to develop a local and international promotional strategy was emphasized. The ICSW submitted a range of forward-looking recommendations to the International Steering Committee regarding the preparations of the Joint world conference in Seoul in 2016, including a need to have an agreed outcome document.

### ***Global Agenda Observatory***

At the meeting in Paris in November 2012 the IASSW, IFSW and ICSW considered specific actions in the context of the implementation of the tripartite Global Agenda adopted earlier that year. In order to gather evidence about the activities of social workers, educators and social development practitioners who support the implementation of the Global Agenda and in order to give visibility and credibility to their contributions and promote further action, it was decided to establish a Global

Agenda Observatory. The past three years provided an opportunity to draw some lessons from the process and suggest improvements.

This new entity is structured around the four themes of the Global Agenda commencing with the theme of *promoting social and economic equalities* (discussed in Melbourne). The themes to be covered in subsequent years include: *promoting the dignity and worth of people* (Seoul, 2016), *working toward environmental sustainability* (Dublin, 2018) and *strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships*. A focus on ensuring an appropriate environment for practice and education will be maintained throughout. The Global Agenda Observatory is conceived as a mechanism for monitoring and reporting upon the implementation of the Agenda Commitments.

The Observatory aims at creating networks or consortia composed of institutions of higher education and professional/practice-based organizations that jointly conduct research, analyze, synthesize and report on Agenda activities. It aspires to establish a strong, credible monitoring mechanism over the next 10 years.

Established at the local, national, regional and international levels, and working through the existing structures and work plans, the Global Agenda Observatory aims at taking into consideration the existing priorities of each of our organizations.

The Report on the first priority theme-- on inequality-- was submitted to the Global Conference in Melbourne in 2014. In 2015 the preparations were underway for the second report on dignity to be released during the Conference in Seoul in 2016.

## **European cooperation**

ICSW Europe is an active participant of the **Social Platform** -- the largest platform of European NGOs (48 INGOs) working in the social sector and geared at promoting social justice, equality and participatory democracy. Supporting effective social protection and welfare systems is one of key concerns of the members, and ICSW has a comparative advantage in building or expanding relationships with like-minded organizations. ICSW was actively involved in the task forces focused on important social and political issues like access to Services (TTIP & TISA), human rights strategy, governance, structural funds, social standards and civil dialogue. A position paper on minimum wage was adopted in 2015 with active support by the ICSW Europe. The European Union offers opportunities for cooperation with a broad range of socially- oriented NGOs (beyond those belonging to the Social Platform) as well as with EU citizens at large. ICSW Europe also participated in the study tours organized by countries during their Presidency of the European Union.

ICSW Europe works closely with the group of INGOs affiliated to the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg (France) in the field of social, economic and cultural rights. Apart from that the ICSW Europe takes part in the pertinent activities of the **European Agency for Fundamental Rights** in Vienna (Austria).

ENSACT, the **European Network for Social Action**, is a network created through cooperation of ICSW Europe, the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), Formation d' Educateurs Sociaux Européens/European Social Educator Training (FESET), Federation Internationale des Communautés Educatives (FICE), International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI), the International Federation of Social Workers European Association (IFSW) PowerUs, Service Users in Social Work Learning Partnership and Social Work and Health Inequalities Network (SWHIN). ENSACT seeks to achieve professional quality and to voice the concerns of professional service providers and social professionals.



ENSACT hosts the European Observatory which aims at monitoring, reporting and disseminating the contributions of social work and social development in building a 'society for all'. The European Observatory is part of the Global Agenda Observatory. The purpose is to gather evidence about the activities of social workers, educators and social development practitioners, in order to give visibility and credibility to their contributions and to promote further action.

### **ICSW cooperating with other NGOs at the UN**

ICSW plays an active role in various activities of the NGO Committees on Social Development in New York and Geneva. In this light ICSW maintains day- to- day partner relations with all Members of the NGO Committee and is actively involved in the preparations of the **Civil Society Forum** convened immediately before the substantive annual session of the Commission for Social Development in New York. The ICSW Executive Director is a member of the Executive Committee of the NGO in New York. Both the ICSW President and the Executive Director have been deeply involved in the preparations and carrying out the annual Forums in the last three years either speaking on the panel or moderating the session.

### **Third priority area: Communicating with our stakeholders**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*ICSW communicates its message through multiple mediums.*

#### **ICSW Website**

Responding to a clear need to make ICSW website more contemporary and user friendly, a **major revamping of the website** was undertaken, and in May 2015 the new website became operational. A significant update was undertaken, resulting in the new structure and new possibilities of the website. Such features as adding images, changing the layout, expanding the size of the page and other improvements have become possible. The website continues to grow and represents a valuable tool of outreach and communication with ICSW audience and beyond. Language editions of various documents are clearly visible and could be easily downloaded. Global and regional activities are duly reflected. ICSW received a financial contribution from ICSW-Europe facilitating the revamping of the website.

Given overall importance of the website as a vital resource and communication medium there is a clear need to continue work aimed at making the website more sophisticated and interactive yet user-friendly.

#### **Publications**

ICSW publishes most of its policy documents on the ICSW website. In addition, ICSW publishes some printed material (see publications and speeches section below).

#### **Global Cooperation Newsletter**

The ICSW monthly Global Cooperation Newsletter is circulated in English, French and Spanish to stakeholders around the world dealing with social development and social welfare issue. All issues of the 2015 Newsletter as well as preceding issues are available at [www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org)



## **Regional Publications**

The year 2015 signified an important threshold when several regional Newsletters published by ICSW regional organizations became a reality. Some of them were either created from scratch or resurrected under the new editors. In some cases (e.g. South Asia) innovative features such as bringing eminent guest editors were introduced. The regional Newsletters are posted on ICSW website. Most important they are sent to the ICSW-affiliated organizations around the world, going beyond the immediate region. The content of many Newsletters combines both regional information and analysis.

For more information on the Newsletters go to: <http://www.icsw.org/regions/regions.htm>. In 2015 the following newsletters were published and available at ICSW Website:

**Central and West Africa:** None

**East and South Africa region:** quarterly

**Middle East and North Africa:** None

**South Asia:** quarterly

**South East Asia and the Pacific:** annually

**North East Asia:** twice a year

**Europe:** quarterly

**North America and the Caribbean:** none

**Latin America:** twice a year.

## **Linkages to ICSW Website**

ICSW encourages member organisations to link ICSW to their Websites.

## **Global Social Policy**

ICSW's link with the journal *Global Social Policy* commenced in 2006. ICSW, with the approval of the two major donors, provided financial assistance to sponsor the section *Southern Voices* until 2010 when reduced funding resulted in this sponsorship being withdrawn. The intention is to forge and maintain links with the academic community to access their vast knowledge and experience which can assist the practice of social welfare and development. Through an arrangement with Sage publications ICSW makes available to all ICSW members an annual subscription *Global Social Policy*.

## **International Social Work**

ICSW is in a partnership with the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in producing the journal *International Social Work*. Six issues are published each year by SAGE publications. ICSW contributes to the *News and Views* section twice each year. The 2013 combined downloads total of 118,187 was a significant increase on 2010 and represents the journal's largest yearly usage figure yet.

## ***Fourth priority area: On-going global advocacy and socially responsible global governance***

### **DESCRIPTION**

*ICSW advocates the strengthening and reform of the multilateral system. ICSW is extending its involvement through engagement with emerging processes focused on the reform of globalisation and global governance.*

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Governance and membership growth in ICSW**

During 2015 ICSW admitted one new National Member Organisations, four Other Member Organisations and one new Associate Member Organisations. As ICSW only admits one National Member Organisation from each country, the additional four members means ICSW has a presence in four more countries. Associate Member Organisation is a new non-voting category and is intended for government bodies. At the GA meeting in Melbourne ICSW introduced a new membership category E-- "Distinguished Fellows". Applications for this category are being received.

### **Post-2015 development framework.**

ICSW took an active part in the preliminary discussions and consultations on the shape of Post- 2015 development framework. We supported inclusion into the outcome document of stand-alone goal on social protection and stand-alone goal on equality. ICSW took part in the meetings of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals as well as in numerous NGO meetings to discuss the content of the future development agenda. The process leading to the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda was duly reflected in the Global Cooperation Newsletter.

### **UN Commission for Social Development – rethinking and strengthening social development**

ICSW takes part in every annual session of the UN Commission for Social Development held in New York, using it as an opportunity to present its vision of social development priorities to the world. The statement made by ICSW at the **53rd Session of the Commission** in February 2015 was devoted to the priority theme of the annual meeting: "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world". UN Member States, civil society and other stakeholders examined the need to respond to new opportunities and challenges of development. The statement made by ICSW underscored that strengthening social protection is not only one of the best ways to reduce insecurity and inequality in the world, but also an effective means to reinvigorate the development agenda and come up with new solutions to a range of old and new social ills. The written statements made at the Commission are available in all six official languages of the UN and are published at the UN website. The 2015 Statement can be found at: <http://www.icsw.org/un/un.htm>.

### **UN Commission on the Status of Women**

Taking into consideration a high priority of gender issues and gender relations as well as their cross-cutting nature, the ICSW for the last three years actively participates in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, contributing to the discussions on the respective main themes. In the statement made in March 2015 at the 59th session of the Commission the ICSW spoke on gender and development nexus, addressing the plight of older women. It was emphasized that older women remain particularly disadvantaged and excluded in many societies, and social protection programs, including SPFs are essential for preventing marginalization of older women in society and securing their rights. The written statement submitted by ICSW can be found at the following UN-WOMEN website:

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2015/NGO/105&referer=http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015/official-documents&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2015/NGO/105&referer=http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015/official-documents&Lang=E)

### **UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing**

ICSW participates in the work of the Group in the last three years. The UN General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of

strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons by considering existing international frameworks and identifying possible gaps and how best to address them. ICSW supports elaboration of a new legal instrument and measures on rights of older persons, and works actively and closely with various partners to promote rights of older persons.

The statements made at the sessions can be found at: <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/documents/fourth/statements/International%20Council%20on%20Social%20Welfare.pdf>

### ***Fifth priority area: Regional level cooperation***

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*ICSW facilitates the cooperation of civil society with regional intergovernmental bodies to achieve better regional social policies and the development and adoption of social programmes in Southern regions.*

#### **OUTCOMES**

##### **Middle East and North Africa**

In June 2015 the ICSW in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region convened a high-level Forum in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert Foundation of Germany on the concept of human dignity and its perception in the Arab region and internationally. The personal involvement of Prof. **Tamer Bachir**, President of ICSW and Prof. **Driss Guerraoui**, Vice-President were crucial for the success of the meeting. The work of the Forum reflected one of the priority themes set up in the Global Agenda of IASSW, ICSW and IFSW.

The event was extensively covered by the regional press and other mass media. The issues of social protection promotion and its advancement in the region were also considered in a separate format.

##### **North East Asia**

The ICSW-affiliated councils working in the region joined forces in the preparation of the Global Conference in Seoul in 2016 under the leadership of Prof. **Heung Bong Cha**, the NEA President. The NEA closely collaborates with the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) in the work of UN Open-Ended Group on Ageing as well as preparatory work for special events during the Joint World Conference in Seoul in 2016.

##### **South Asia**

**ICSW South Asia Region** collaborated with Head Held High Foundation, Bengaluru, India on global initiative called **GAP** - Global Action on Poverty. A movement to eradicate poverty globally, through thought and action the **GAP 2015 Summit** brought together 100 Changemakers (those who are working on the ground in various aspects of poverty eradication) and about 70 Catalysts (people and organizations who support Changemakers through resources, connections, funds and advice). The 2 day event was held at Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram & Gujarat Vidyapith in March, 2015. ICSW Regional President Prof. **P.K. Shajahan** in his capacity as a Catalyst with GAP is geared at setting up a GAP Lab at Tata Institute of Social Sciences as an Institutional platform for the Changemakers to translate their ideas into action. The involvement of Prof. Shajahan was crucial in revamping the regional Newsletter and introducing innovative features.

##### **South East Asia and the Pacific**

The 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN GO-NGO Forum for Social Welfare and Development was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in September 2015. It was devoted to ageing, promotion of social

protection, rights of older persons and measures to strengthen their resilience. The ICSW representative for the 10<sup>th</sup> GO-NGO forum was Vice-President, Madam Khatijah Suleiman, President of Malaysian Council of Rehabilitation. Her role was crucial in the preparation of the Forum, as well as in resurrecting the regional Newsletter.

The recommendations from the Forum focused on implementation of the recommendations made in previous GO-NGO forums also charting new approaches. Acting as a co-convener ICSW brought together national member councils from the region and representatives of expert organisations.

### **Latin America**

In the wake of the highly-acclaimed December 2014 Forum convened in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic by ICSW in cooperation with DIDA (La Dirección de Información y Defensa de los Afiliados a la Seguridad Social) and aimed at exploring ways and means to enhance the visibility and effectiveness of social protection in Latin America, a regional meeting was convened in June-July 2015 in San Paulo, Brazil by Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC), CBCISS (CENTRO BRASILEIRO DE COOPERAÇÃO E INTERCÂMBIO DE SERVIÇOS SOCIAIS), and DIDA, highlighting the significance of SPFI in the region. On behalf of ICSW, Madam Nelsida Marmolejos the Regional President for Latin America whose role has been vital in all ICSW activities in the region, has also delivered a key-note statement at the regional conference "The right to health and social policy: challenges for social work" convened in October 2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

### **East and Southern Africa.**

The regional ICSW Newsletter has been resurrected under the leadership of Mr. Benjamin Mutie, ICSW Regional President, as an influential publication highlighting key regional events.

### **North America and the Caribbean Region**

Efforts were made to revitalize and strengthen the Region which comprises the United States of America, Canada and Jamaica. The US Committee hosted a regional meeting on June with the Council of Voluntary Social Services – Jamaica and the Canadian Council on Social Development to chart the way forward and elect officers for the Region.

### **Europe**

The ICSW Europe closely and fruitfully cooperates with IFSW and EASSW, as well as with East European sub-regional Association of the Schools of Social Work, particularly in the context of Social Platform activities and exchange of information. Recently the membership of the ICSW Europe has increased, with 3 new members coming on board in 2015: the Czech Republic, Ireland, and the Russian Federation. ICSW Europe participates in several scientific, educational and practical projects (like Horizon). The organization is also a founding member of the new Covenant on Demographic Change in partnerships with the AGE Platform. ICSW Europe jointly celebrated the World Social Work Day with its sister organizations-- IFSW Europe, EASSW and its members.

The ICSW Regional President, Prof Miloslav Hettes played in key role in conceptualization of all regional conferences as well as in resurrecting the regional Newsletter which is now published four times a year and has its own ISSN 2411-9709 with several hundred subscribers. The Regional President promoted ICSW mission in the context of several

international events oriented at social work education, history of the social work, and promotion of the “smart cities”.

Activities, reports, minutes of the ICSW Europe are open to the public, and in the spirit of transparency published in newsletters and on Facebook. The Board of the organization meets monthly via Skype.

Among the priority areas of the organization within the Social Platform are the following: access to services; monitoring implementation of SDGs; advocacy efforts to promote social standards; job search for a long-term unemployed; implementation of the advocacy strategy to promote investment in services, including social investment; the quest for influence upon the negotiations of trade agreements such as TTIP and TiSA, as well as measuring the social impact.

ICSW Europe prepares a special symposium focused on social problems of migrants in the course of Joint World Conference in Seoul in June 2016. Many members plan individual presentations there as well.

### ***Sixth priority area: Policy dialogues and capacity- development***

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*ICSW will enhance the sharing of information, knowledge and experience between all stakeholders. The stakeholders will learn from each other successful practices in participating in regional governance, new modes of decentralised provision of social services and new approaches to social and economic security.*

#### **OUTCOMES**

##### **Knowledge sharing and capacity-development**

The regional conferences, seminars and expert meetings organized by ICSW and affiliated organizations substantially benefited from exploring and comparing best practices of other members within the region as well as stakeholders and partners from outside of the region. These policy dialogues have proven to be a useful cross-fertilization tool to enhance the quality of the discussions and the relevance of the outcomes. It has also contributed to better understanding of changing international social norms, exchange of ideas, and promoting most effective ways to address concerns and needs of vulnerable sections of the population.

The main focus of discussions and policy dialogue has been on sharing knowledge and experience on the Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI). The methodology used in regional training programmes has been the provision of expert knowledge linked to the sharing of experiences between South practitioners. This was evidenced in the programmes implemented in Europe, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, South East Asia and Latin America.

In this light the Global and regional Newsletters provide a forum for sharing ideas and knowledge not only within a region but between regions.

##### **Policy advice at the national level.**

Apart from advocacy and capacity development efforts described above, 2015 signified an important breakthrough for ICSW in terms of broadening its activities and providing policy

advice at the national level to stakeholders in South East Asia, namely in Laos. The contract signed between ICSW and International Labour Organization stipulated development of the assessment matrix which contained for each of the four guarantees of the SPF an inventory of existing social security, social protection and poverty alleviation programmes. President of ICSW acting on behalf of ICSW identified priority policy options, also estimating the cost of the proposed social protection provision. This capacity development project was implemented on the ground through national dialogue with local stakeholders.

### ***Publications and Speeches***

All recent publications and speeches are on the ICSW website: <http://www.icsw.org>.

### ***Employees***

The International Council on Social Welfare is an equal opportunities employer and applies objective criteria to assess merit. It aims to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Selection criteria and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. All employees are given equal opportunity and, where appropriate and possible, special training to enable them to progress both within and outside the organisation. The International Council on Social Welfare is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective, and brings it to the attention of all employees.